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7.0. 1965: RE: 7/24/65 (TAYLOR, JAMES E.) OF-P
 FROM: WPP, RINT, AF, HP
 INFO: (LNU) POSSIBLE MOTIVATIONS "FINDING SOVIET DECISION TO
 PUBLISHED ITS EFFORTS TO "NEGOTIATE" SETTLEMENT OF CUBA'S
 CRISIS CONFLICT

b. (C - 207182-1527)

1. SUMMARY: THE SOVIET DECISION TO INFORM US AND A NUMBER OF OTHER NATIONS WERE, DIRECTLY BY SOVIET MINISTER-COUNSELOR VASILY PAKHOMCHUK AND INDIRECTLY BY TOP AMBASSADOR WERNERHOF SCHULTEHAU, WAS PROBABLY MOTIVATED PRIMARILY BY A DESIRE TO ARTICULATE IMPORTANT SOVIET INTERESTS IN AFGHANISTAN, WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY UNDERSCORING MOSCOW'S EFFORTS TO FIND A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THIS REVOLUTIONARY REGIME'S GROWING DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES. BY DOING SO, MOSCOW POSSIBLY BELIEVES THAT IT HAS "LEGITIMIZED" WHATEVER FUTURE POLITIES IT MAY BUILD, AND HAS ALSO MADE A CASE FOR DEFLECTING ANY FOREIGN CRITICISM STEERING FROM WHATEVER ACTIONS THE SOVIETS MIGHT EVENTUALLY DECIDE ARE NECESSARY.

1. MOST OBSERVERS WERE FEEL AN ELEVENTH-HOUR ATTEMPT TO ARRANGE A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE ONGOING STRIFE IS DOOMED TO FAILURE, NOT LEAST OF ALL BECAUSE THE KEY INGREDIENT -- THE DEPENDENCE OF PRIME MINISTER HAFIZULLAH AMIN -- MAY BE UNOBTAINABLE. NONETHELESS, SARCHONCHUK'S EFFORTS -- WHICH MAY STILL BE UNDERWAY -- AT THE MINIMUM LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR A FURTHER SOVIET CLAIM THAT MOSCOW DID EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO NEGOTIATE A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF AFGHANISTAN'S DOMESTIC CONFLICT, AND THAT WHATEVER FUTURE STEPS MAY BE TAKEN WILL BE JUSTIFIED BY A MAJOR POWER'S REQUIREMENTS TO PROTECT WHAT IT VIEWS AS ITS LEGITIMATE IMPORTANT INTERESTS.

4. WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE THAT SAFRONCHUK'S MISSION WILL MEET WITH PENDING SUCCESS, AND THAT, AS A RESULT, AN ENHANCED SOVIET ROLE -- WHICH NOW MAY BE EMERGING IN THE MILITARY FIELD HERE -- WILL PROBABLY EVOLVE INTO THE SALIENT FEATURE OF THIS DRA'S MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY.

5. THE PRIMARY MOTIVATION BEHIND THE SOVIET DECISION TO INFORM US, AND OTHER DIPLO EMBASSIES HERE (WE ARE AWARE THAT THE AMERICANS, GREEKESMIS, FRENCH, INDIANS, AND PAKISTANIS HAVE BEEN APPROACHED), DIRECTLY BY VASILY SAFRONCHUK AND INDIRECTLY THROUGH GDR AMBASSADOR SCHWIESSAU, OF MOSCOW'S "NEGOTIATIONS" WITH THE AFGHANS TO BRING ABOUT A "BROADENED POLITICAL BASE" FOR THIS REGIME, AND, PERHAPS, COSMETIC ALTERATION IN THE MAKE-UP OF THE DRA LEADERSHIP, WAS PROBABLY A DESIRE TO "LEGITIMIZE" WHATEVER FUTURE ACTIONS AND POLICIES THE SOVIETS MAY PURSUE TOWARD AFGHANISTAN. BY STRESSING MOSCOW'S JUSTIFIABLE CONCERNS FOR DEVELOPMENTS IN A COUNTRY BORDERING ON ITS OWN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS, AND BY EMPHASIZING MOSCOW'S NEED TO SUPPORT A "FRATERNAL" PARTY (LIST OTHER "FRATERNAL" PARTIES IN THE WORLD RAISE QUESTIONS REGARDING THE DEPTH OF SOVIET COMMITMENT AND RESOLVE TO THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT), THE SOVIETS ARE MAKING A CASE THAT THEIR INTERESTS IN AFGHANISTAN ARE SIGNIFICANT, ALBEIT PERHAPS NOT VITAL, AND THAT THEY HAVE THE "RIGHT" OF A MAJOR POWER TO TAKE WHATEVER STEPS NECESSARY TO PROTECT THESE INTERESTS. (LEFT UNSAID BY SAFRONCHUK AND SCHWIESSAU, SO FAR AT LEAST, ARE MOSCOW'S LESS ALTRUISTIC DESIRES TO PROTECT ITS CONSIDERABLE INVESTMENT OF RESOURCES IN THIS COUNTRY AND AN UNDERSTANDABLE WISH TO AVOID POSSIBLY EMBARRASSING CONSEQUENCES IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA WHICH THE FALL OF THE DRA WOULD ENTAIL.) AT THE SAME TIME, BY WIDELY "PUBLICIZING" THEIR REPORTED EFFORTS TO FORMULATE A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE DOMESTIC STRIFE HERE, THE SOVIETS ARE PERHAPS ALSO LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A CLAIM THAT MOSCOW GENUINELY DESIRES A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF ONGOING PROBLEMS AND IS EXPENDING CONSIDERABLE EFFORT -- AND RUNNING NOT INSIGNIFICANT POLITICAL RISKS -- TO AVOID FURTHER DETERIORATION IN THE DRA'S POSITION.

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PP RUHCR
DE RUEBLX #5627/ 236784Z
ZNY SSSSS ZIM
P R 250714Z JUL 79
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASH-DC PRIORITY 4879
INFO RUHQH/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 3675
RUEHBE/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 2331
RUEHOD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 9057
RUOTPA/AMEMBASSY JEDDA 2352
RUOTQ/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1704
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1762
RUEBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 7124
RUFNPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS 3175
RUOHHR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 2343
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6. THIS RELATIVELY OVERT SOVIET APPROACH TO US AND REPRESENTATIVES OF AFGHANISTAN'S REGIONAL NEIGHBORS COULD WELL BE AIMED AT HEADING OFF ANY OBJECTIONS TO A HEIGHTENED SOVIET PRESENCE IN THIS COUNTRY, SHOULD SAFRONCHUK'S EFFORTS TO REACH A POLITICAL SOLUTION PROVE FRUITLESS. IN THE U.S.-SOVIET CONTEXT, WE PRESUME THAT NOT THE LEAST OF SOVIET CONCERNS WOULD BE A DESIRE TO AVOID SPARKING A NEGATIVE REACTION IN THE U.S. AT THE TIME OF THE DEBATE ON SALT II.

7. WE HAVE LITTLE DOUBT THAT MOSCOW WOULD GENUINELY LIKE TO DISCOVER A POLITICAL MEANS TO GUARANTEE THE FUTURE OF A FUNCTIONING AND REASONABLY SECURE MARXIST REGIME IN KABUL. THE HOUR IS LATE FOR SUCH AN EFFORT, HOWEVER, AND IT COULD WELL BE THAT SAFRONCHUK IS ON A "MISSION IMPOSSIBLE" REPRESENTING LITTLE MORE THAN A LAST-DITCH TRY AT CONVINCING THE KHALGIS TO "DO SOMETHING" TO PUT THEIR DOMESTIC HOUSE IN ORDER. MOST OBSERVERS, APPARENTLY INCLUDING THE SOVIETS, BELIEVE THAT THE MINIMUM NECESSARY TO DEFUSE THE OPPOSITION EFFECTIVELY WOULD BE THE DEPARTURE (PREFERABLY FEET FIRST) OF PRIME MINISTER HAFIZULLAH AMIN, AN EVENTUALITY WHICH THESE SAME OBSERVERS CONSIDER VERY DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE. THUS, IN THE ABSENCE OF AMIN'S DEMISE, VOLUNTARY OR OTHERWISE, SAFRONCHUK'S GOAL PROBABLY IS UNATTAINABLE.

8. THE SOVIETS WERE PROBABLY AWARE OF THE VIRTUAL FUTILITY OF SAPHRONCHUK'S TASK (ASSUMING MOSCOW IS UNWILLING TO HARKEN BACK TO THE STALIN DAYS AND ELIMINATE AMIN THEMSELVES), BUT FOR THE REASONS CITED ABOVE, HIS "NEGOTIATING" EFFORT HAD TO BE MADE AND GIVEN CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY PRIOR TO ANY FURTHER ESCALATION OF SOVIET STEPS TO PROP UP THE DRA REGIME. THE SOVIETS MAY HAVE FELT THAT IF AMIN COULD BE PERSUADED TO ACCEPT "HONORABLE EXILE," PERHAPS IN A DACHA OUTSIDE TASHKENT, SO MUCH THE BETTER. IF HE COULD NOT, HOWEVER, MOSCOW WOULD FORGE AHEAD WITH WHATEVER SUPPORT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO "GUARANTEE" THE SURVIVAL OF THE AFGHAN REVOLUTION. ANY ENHANCED SUPPORT -- BY VIRTUE OF THE GROUNDWORK ALREADY PREPARED WITH US AND AFGHANISTAN'S REGIONAL NEIGHBORS -- WOULD THEREFORE, BE "ACCEPTABLE" IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA, SINCE IT WOULD SERVE TO PROTECT IMPORTANT AND LEGITIMATE SOVIET INTERESTS, A RESPONSIBILITY WHICH NO GOVERNMENT IN MOSCOW COULD BE EXPECTED TO SHIRK.

9. ONE COULD ARGUE, OF COURSE, THAT THE SOVIETS, IF THEIR "GOOD-OFFICES" ARE REBUFFED BY AMIN, COULD DECIDE TO WITHHOLD FURTHER ASSISTANCE AND LEAVE THE DRA AT THE MERCY OF THE INSURGENTS. WE SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT SUCH AN EVENTUALITY IS PROBABLE, NOT ONLY BECAUSE THE USSR DOES INDEED HAVE IMPORTANT INTERESTS AT STAKE IN AFGHANISTAN, BUT ALSO BECAUSE RECENT INFORMATION HERE POINTS TO A GROWING SOVIET PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE ACTUAL CARRYING OUT OF ANTI-INSURGENCY MILITARY OPERATIONS, A DEVELOPMENT WHICH DOES NOT POINT TO AN IMMINENT ABANDONMENT OF THE DRA.

10. THE CURRENT STATUS OF SAFRONCHUK'S "PEACE MISSION" IS UNKNOWN. SAFRONCHUK HIMSELF HAS BEEN INDISPOSED THE PAST FEW DAYS WITH "STOMACH PROBLEMS," BUT WHETHER THIS SUGGESTS A STOCKTAKING PERIOD IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY. SCHWIESAU CONTINUES HIS "BRIEFING" OF FOREIGN EMBASSIES REGARDING SAFRONCHUK'S MISSION. BASED ON HINTS IN PUBLIC SPEECHES, AND ON SCHWIESAU'S PERIPATETIC CALLS, WE ARE VIRTUALLY CERTAIN THAT INFORMATION REGARDING SAFRONCHUK'S ACTIVITIES HAS LONG AGO REACHED AMIN'S EARS, AND WE CANNOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT SAFRONCHUK HAS ALREADY BROACHED THE ISSUE OF AMIN'S DEPARTURE WITH THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF. NONETHELESS, THE CONTINUED TARAKI-AMIN HAND AT THE HELM, AND SCHWIESAU'S ONGOING ACTIVITY, SUGGEST THAT THE SAFRONCHUK CAPER HAS NOT YET RUN ITS COURSE, AND THAT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS MAY YET EMERGE. THE FACT THAT SAFRONCHUK AND SCHWIESAU HAVE NOT BEEN PUNGED BY AMIN SUGGESTS FURTHER THAT SOVIET "PRESSURE" MAY NOT BE SEVERE, OR EVEN HOSTILE, BUT THAT THE "NEGOTIATIONS" ARE, IN FACT, GENUINE ATTEMPTS TO FIND VIABLE ANSWERS.

11. THUS, THE DENOUEMENT OF THIS PARTICULAR DRAMA PROBABLY REMAINS TO BE SEEN. WE ANTICIPATE, HOWEVER, THAT AN ENHANCED SOVIET ROLE WILL PROBABLY EMERGE AS A RESULT OF AMIN'S INTRANSIGENCE, AND MOSCOW'S POSSIBLY REACHING THE CONCLUSION THAT THEIR OPTIONS ARE SEVERELY RESTRICTED AND THAT EVEN A REGIME CONTROLLED BY AMIN IS PREFERABLE TO ONE LED BY THE "MAD MULLAHs." AMSTUTZ

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